

The Baptism of Jesus Mark 1:1-10

Proposition: One of the reasons for baptism is worship

This morning we are going to begin a series of Bible studies from Mark's gospel. And we are going to hopefully get an insight into John Mark the author, but more importantly see why Jesus who was perfect, never sinned, had nothing to be cleaned from, felt baptism by full emersion was so important. For many of you, baptism as a believer is just an option if God leads you to do that. You need to know that nothing in scripture supports that belief. And if you are annoyed by references to baptism in the Bible or you have often thought about being baptized as a believer and the place and meaning of baptism has puzzled you, I trust what we study this morning will give you biblical answers. I have found that there are three topics that are usually mistaught in modern churches: repentance, community ministries and baptism. The misunderstandings around those three things are based on traditions, not scripture or the example of the early church. If you find yourself reacting to anything I share this morning, that's OK. But don't come and tell me you disagree until you have first searched the Bible for yourself.

I am going to begin by telling you a little bit about this man called John Mark, the author of this short, punchy, action packed, fast moving gospel. John is his Hebrew name and Mark is his Roman name. He is writing a record of what Jesus did, rather than what Jesus said, and he only quotes the Old Testament twice in his whole account because he is writing about the life of Jesus in such a way that the Romans of that day could understand it. John Mark is just the perfect person to write this letter because of his background. Acts 12 tells us that he was the son of a wealthy woman in whose home the early church often met for prayer. He came to faith under the apostle Peter's ministry and so when you read of the things Jesus did, he is recalling for us what Peter saw and heard first hand.

In 1 Peter 5 Peter refers to John Mark as his spiritual son.

John Mark has a famous uncle called ... Barnabas. Barnabas and Paul were led of God to do a mission trip into Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey and Uncle Barnabas said to Paul, "Hey let's take John Mark with us as an understudy, as a trainee minister." Problem was, part way through the mission trip John Mark went home. He gave up, which really disappointed Paul. I mean, who is this young man who lets us down and turns back when the job is only partly done.

Barnabas and Paul have a pretty serious disagreement about John Mark and go their separate ways. Meanwhile Uncle Barney keeps mentoring the young man and investing in his character and spiritual development. Towards the end of the book of Acts Paul is just about to be beheaded and he requests that John Mark be sent to him because he would value his encouragement.

What that means is, Uncle Barney didn't give up on John Mark, and in fact did a great job. This guy who chickened out and gave up is fully restored and becomes a great minister in God's kingdom. Even to the point of being one of the four people who wrote an account of Jesus' life.

That tells me that if you or I have dropped the ball, have stepped out of faith and into something else, our Barnabas the Holy Spirit can fully restore us and use us greatly. It tells me that if someone you are mentoring mucks up, don't give up, they can still become outstanding ministers of the Kingdom.

Let's have a brief look at The Bible Project's overview of Marks account.

The Bible Project. New Testament. Mark <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGHy9-DtXk>

All the way through Mark's gospel he presents Jesus as the Servant. Now if you are inspecting a servant or a slave you don't need genealogies or pedigrees and so Mark jumps right into Jesus's story.

1 This is the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 It began just as God had said in the book written by Isaiah the prophet,

"I am sending my messenger to get the way ready for you.

3 In the desert someone is shouting, 'Get the road ready for the Lord! Make a straight path for him.'"

This is not a good idea, or something to discuss. Mark makes a declaration. This is Good News, guys, and then Mark quotes Isaiah to help us understand the purpose of Jesus' biological cousin, John the Baptist.

4 So John the Baptist showed up in the desert and told everyone, "Turn back to God and be baptized! Then your sins will be forgiven."

5 From all Judea and Jerusalem crowds of people went to John. They told how sorry they were for their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River.

6 John wore clothes made of camel's hair. He had a leather strap around his waist and ate grasshoppers and wild honey.

⁷ John also told the people, "Someone more powerful is going to come. And I am not good enough even to stoop down and untie his sandals. ⁸ I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit!"

Keep this in mind as we review this story. Baptism, under John the Baptist's ministry was not a Christian baptism as Jesus had not died yet and the Holy Spirit had not been sent. John's baptism was all about repenting and being cleaned on the inside. It was a baptism of repentance. Following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, Baptism is a part of the normal, supernatural conversion experience. This baptism is different from our baptism.

John is preaching, "Repent and be baptized so that your sins will be forgiven," when suddenly cousin Jesus shows up. Now John knows his cousin Jesus really, really well, he knows that Jesus is sinless and holy. The other gospel writers record John's protests, "Jesus, I don't want to baptize you, I ought to be baptized by you."

⁹ About that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. ¹⁰ As soon as Jesus came out of the water, he saw the sky open and the Holy Spirit coming down to him like a dove. ¹¹ A voice from heaven said, "You are my own dear Son, and I am pleased with you."

¹² Right away God's Spirit made Jesus go into the desert. ¹³ He stayed there for forty days while Satan tested him. Jesus was with the wild animals, but angels took care of him.

Now I am not surprised that Satan tried to take Jesus out straight away after Jesus was baptized; there is usually a battle if people wait to be baptized, a battle that many people lose. There is also usually an intense battle after a person is baptized as Satan tries to trick back ownership of that person.

But what is surprising, absolutely shocking is that Jesus chose to be baptized at all. I am going to read you a whole list of scriptures about baptism, but bear this in mind as I do, Jesus was dedicated as a baby and blessed by two spiritual giants, he had a bar mitzvah or what many would call a confirmation service around the age of 12. He lived a perfect life, and yet He insisted on being baptized by John the Baptist.

Listen to these scriptures that explain what baptism is.

BAPTISM EXPLAINED FROM SCRIPTURE?

1. Two things are necessary before a person can be baptized:

Acts 2:41 On that day about three thousand BELIEVED his message and were baptized."

a) _____

Acts 2:38 Peter said, "TURN BACK TO GOD! Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven. Then you will be given the Holy Spirit.

b) _____

I would encourage you to baptize anyone you lead to faith but they must BELIEVE and TURN BACK TO GOD first. The old-fashioned word is repent, it means a specific turning from specific sins.

You and I should never offer to baptize someone who doesn't believe that Jesus died for their sins or someone who has not made a commitment before God to turn away from specific sins. Now they don't have to prove that commitment before you baptize them but there has to be a change of heart.

2. Baptism can only be by full immersion e.g.

Acts 8:38 "Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water."

Matt 3:16 "As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water."

3. Baptism is part of the salvation package/ event

Mark 16:16-18

¹⁶ Anyone who believes me and is baptized will be SAVED. But anyone who refuses to believe me will be condemned. ¹⁷ Everyone who believes me will be able to do wonderful things. By using my name, they will force out demons, and they will speak new languages. ¹⁸ They will handle snakes and will drink poison and not be hurt. They will also heal sick people by placing their hands on them.

4. Baptism supernaturally cleanses a person. I think this has to do with unconfessed sin.

Ephesians 5:26 "He made the church holy by the power of His Word, and He made it pure by washing it with water."

5. It breaks the control of sin in our lives

Romans 6:5-7

⁵ *If we shared in Jesus' death by being baptized, we will be raised to life with him.* ⁶ *We know that the persons we used to be were nailed to the cross with Jesus. This was done, so that our sinful bodies would NO LONGER BE THE SLAVES OF SIN.* ⁷ *We know that sin doesn't have power over dead people.*

6. *It's when you got the team jersey.*

Galatians 3:27 And when you were baptized, it was as though you had put on Christ in the same way you put on new clothes.

7. Repentance, Baptism under water and Baptism in the Holy Spirit always happened immediately when a person believed.

Acts 8:36-37

As they were going along the road, they came to a place where there was some water. The official said, "Look! Here is some water. Why can't I be baptized?"

Acts 16:31-33

³¹ *They replied, "Have faith in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved! This is also true for everyone who lives in your home."*

³² *Then Paul and Silas told him and everyone else in his house about the Lord.* ³³ *While it was still night, the jailer took them to a place where he could wash their cuts and bruises. Then he and everyone in his home were baptized.*

I mentioned at the start of the message that around repentance, community ministries and baptisms we have many religious but biblically untrue practices in the modern church;

Here are some.

The Bible does NOT say

1. **Babies can be baptized.**
2. **Baptism should be before witnesses or in church service**
3. **Baptism is just an option and a symbolic act**
4. **Anything more than faith and repentance is needed before a person is baptized.**

It helps make a disciple to let them respond to God's call on their life immediately. It sets up a pattern for a life of discipleship.

Now that is a quick rush through on what the Bible says about Baptism, and it's quite uncomfortable as it's different from what religious traditions of many churches often teach. As I said before, I expect people to disagree with the Bible on the grounds of tradition. So I encourage you this week to take time to go back and check things out from the Word.

Here's the thing though.

If baptism is something you do when you are old enough to believe and repent and it's a supernatural event that cleans us of sin and is part of salvation, then why, why on earth did Jesus decide to get baptized. It makes no sense?

WHY DID JESUS DEMAND TO BE BAPTIZED BY JOHN?

I can't say for sure but I have heard these suggestions;

a) **As an example to us**

Every person who comes to faith and repentance in the NT is immediately baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit. The Bible refers to Jesus as our big brother, a second Adam, the first of a new type of person.

Maybe He got baptised to demonstrate to all of us that we too need to be baptized.

b) **To be first to put on the team jersey**

The word baptizo from which we get the word baptise was used for people who dyed cloth in ancient times. They took a pale piece of cloth, plunged under purple coloured water and it would come up purple. The cloth as it were identified with the dye.

Baptism biblically is a sign that we belong to His team. Was He being the first to put on the jersey so that we too could identify with Him latter?

c) As a prophetic act

Some suggest that by being buried under water Jesus was saying that He knew He was destined for an early grave, and being raised from the water it showed His belief that he would be raised back to life again.

There is no doubt in my mind that Jesus the most amazing person that ever lived, radical Jesus, the Son of God had this purpose in mind.

d) It was an act of worship

I am convinced that Jesus was baptized even though in principle He had no need to be, unlike each one of us, but because he wanted to do everything that the Father wanted Him to do. I believe it was an over the top act of devotion and worship. As he comes up out of the water He who was conceived of the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb now had the Holy Spirit descending on him like a dove. And when He is baptized in the Holy Spirit He is now empowered to start ministry. Jesus said the same thing would happen to us when the Holy Spirit comes on us (Acts 1:8).

Jesus chose to be baptized, because He loved the Father and just wanted to do everything the Father wanted Him to do.

Then a voice from heaven is heard saying

"You are my own dear Son, and I am pleased with you."